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ARMS 10-14

NIGHT LD

WASHINGTON (UPI) -- PRESIDENT NIXON CONFERRED FOR AN HOUR WITH SECRETARY OF STATE HENRY A. KISSINGER SUNDAY, APPARENTLY DISCUSSING A REPORTED DECISION TO RESUPPLY ISRAEL WITH SOME OF THE JET FIGHTERS AND TANKS IT LOST DURING THE PAST WEEK OF FIGHTING IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

WHITE HOUSE CHIEF OF STAFF ALEXANDER M. HAIG, WHO ALSO MET WITH NIXON, REFUSED TO COMMENT ON REPORTS FROM GOVERNMENT SOURCES THAT THE DECISION WAS MADE FRIDAY TO REPLACE AT LEAST SOME OF THE ISRAELI TANKS AND PLANES -- PRIMARILY F4 PHANTOM FIGHTER-BOMBERS. BUT HE ADDED:

"WE'RE GOING TO MAINTAIN THE BALANCE AND CONTINUE WITH ONGOING SHIPMENTS. WE'RE INTENSIVELY DISCUSSING THE SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS WHICH CAME OUT OF THE SITUATION."

THE DECISION CAME TO LIGHT SATURDAY AFTER STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS REVISED THEIR ASSESSMENT OF SOVIET ARMS SHIPMENTS TO THE ARAB NATIONS FROM MODERATE TO "FAIRLY SUBSTANTIAL." SOURCES ESTIMATED THE SOVIET SHIPMENT AT 200,000 TONS OVER THE PAST WEEK.

NEITHER THE STATE DEPARTMENT NOR THE PENTAGON WOULD CONFIRM THE REPORT. THE WHITE HOUSE SAID ONLY THAT KISSINGER HAD MET WITH NIXON IN THE WHITE HOUSE AFTER THE PRESIDENT RETURNED FROM AN OVERNIGHT STAY AT CAMP DAVID, MD. KISSINGER THEN RETURNED TO HIS OWN OFFICE TO CONTINUE WORKING ON U.S. DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST, ACCORDING TO THE STATE DEPARTMENT.

SEN. ROBERT GRIFFIN, R-MICH, SAID SUNDAY "THERE ISN'T ANY QUESTION THAT WE WILL BE SUPPLYING ISRAEL WITH PLANES AND EQUIPMENT." INTERVIEWED ON ABC'S ISSUES AND ANSWERS, HE SAID HE HAD TALKED TO KISSINGER EARLIER IN THE DAY.

THE WASHINGTON POST REPORTED SUNDAY THAT KISSINGER TOLD ISRAELI FOREIGN MINISTER ABBA EBAN IN A 40-MINUTE MEETING SATURDAY THE UNITED STATES WOULD SEEK A MIDDLE EAST CEASE-FIRE "IN PLACE." BUT THERE WERE NO OTHER INDICATIONS THAT THE UNITED STATES HAD ABANDONED ITS EARLIER PREFERENCE FOR A RETURN TO THE 1967 CEASE-FIRE LINES.

STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS HAVE SAID THERE WAS "NO BASIS" TO REPORTS THAT SAUDIA ARABIA'S KING FAISAL SENT A MESSAGE TO NIXON THREATENING TO CUT OFF OIL SHIPMENTS IF THE UNITED STATES CONTINUES TO SEND ARMS TO ISRAEL. THEY ALSO REFUSED TO DISCUSS REPORTS OF U.S. RECONNAISSANCE FLIGHTS OVER EGYPT.

GOVERNMENT SOURCES COULD NOT CONFIRM REPORTS THAT THE STEPPED-UP SHIPMENTS TO ISRAEL ALREADY HAD STARTED NOR WAS THERE ANY INDICATION HOW MANY TANKS AND PLANES WOULD BE SENT.

BUT INFORMED DIPLOMATIC SOURCES SAID THEY UNDERSTOOD THAT IF THE SOVIET SUPPLY TO THE ARABS CONTINUED, THE FIRST AMERICAN REPLACEMENTS TO ISRAEL WOULD CONSIST OF SOME 46 F4 PHANTOM JETS WHICH THE AIR FORCE CAN SPARE IN EUROPE.

THE NEW PLANS FOR U.S. ARMS DELIVERIES GO FOR BEYOND THE LIMITED AMOUNTS OF BOMBS AND ROCKETS THAT ISRAEL TRANSPORT PLANES HAVE BEEN PICKING UP IN THE UNITED STATES IN RECENT DAYS, SOURCES SAID.

THEY SAID ISRAEL LOST ABOUT 100 FIGHTERS IN THE FIRST WEEK OF RENEWED FIGHTING WITH THE ARABS, MORE THAN ONE-FOURTH THEIR TOTAL STRIKE FORCE. OFFICIALS ESTIMATED ISRAEL ALSO LOST AS MANY AS 650 TANKS OR MORE THAN ONE-THIRD OF THAT FORCE.

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